

# REVOLUTION '76

**Historical Perspective**

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## **Revolution '76: Historical Perspective**

By  
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Special thanks to  
John Stanoch  
for his support at a crucial time.

# Revolution '76

## Apple IIgs Version

### Player's Addendum

This addendum supplements the information in the *Player's Reference*. Please read before starting *Revolution '76*.

#### CORRECTIONS TO ON-SCREEN PASSWORD QUESTIONS

Page 6 of the *Player's Reference* refers to the password requirement for beginning the program. One of several random questions will appear on the screen. In three cases, the question asked is worded incorrectly. The corrections are as follows:

1. Question on screen reads:  
What is the second word in the first paragraph on Page 8 of the Historical Perspective?

Should read:

What is the second word in the last paragraph on Page 7 of the Historical Perspective?

2. Question on screen reads:  
What is the second word in the first paragraph on Page 46 of the Historical Perspective?

Should read:

What is the second word in the last paragraph on Page 45 of the Historical Perspective?

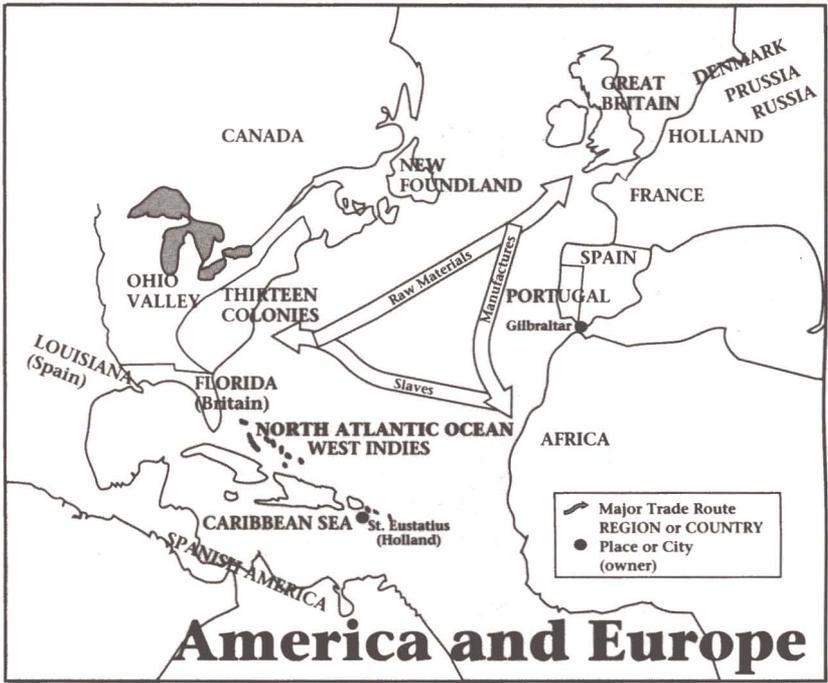
3. Question on screen reads:  
What is the second word in the first paragraph on Page 41 of the Historical Perspective?

Should read:

What is the 99th word in the last paragraph on Page 40 of the Historical Perspective? *Note: The word is "accounting". You may want to circle the word to avoid counting to 99 every time!*

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## BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

**T**HE THIRTEEN COLONIES appeared when British subjects, seeking refuge from religious persecution or the opportunities offered by a vast untamed continent, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the eastern seaboard of North America. Their migration began in the early 1600s, and by the end of that century they had created a string of settlements along the coast. Over the course of the next three quarters of a century these areas of settlement grew thicker, merged and penetrated deeper into the interior, until they reached the first great barrier to expansion, the Appalachian Mountains.

The courageous pioneers faced great difficulties during the early years. They braved a harrowing sea voyage, they endured the hunger and privation of the first winters, and they lived with the ever-present danger of attacks by Indians, who resented and then resisted the encroachments upon the land and resources they had used since time immemorial.

As the European settlers consolidated their hold on the coastal territories, the nature of their settlements changed. In the northern colonies, New England and the middle colonies, rough frontier villages grew into established towns, with busy wharves and warehouses, well-stocked shops and markets, fine houses and stately government buildings along with a multitude of humble dwellings. In the southern colonies, the Chesapeake region and the Carolinas, plantations grew up, vast estates upon which gangs of imported African slaves raised commercial crops, tobacco and rice for sale in European markets. In all areas, rustic subsistence gave way to a more refined, settled existence in which an upper class of wealthy citizens did their best to live a life of European gentility,

while the lesser classes of freemen plied their trades and farmed their land much like their cousins back in Europe. In the interior, a frontier life of relative privation and relative equality continued, but along the coast a mature, settled community emerged.

**America in the British Empire** – These maturing American colonies did not exist in isolation. They formed part of an interconnected empire created by the British during the late 1600s that fueled an enormous economic expansion in the 1700s. The central engine of this empire was a triangular trade route along which manufactured goods were exchanged for slaves, slaves were exchanged for agricultural products like tobacco and rice, these products were then transported back to the centers of industry to be exchanged for manufactured goods.

At the first terminus of this route lay Britain herself, with a strong navy, a large merchant fleet, and a rapidly evolving industrial economy. Protected by the Royal Navy, British merchantmen carried manufactured goods to the second terminus, the coast of Africa. Here these goods were traded for slaves, who were then transported to the third terminus, America, where they worked on the tobacco plantations of Virginia, the rice plantations of the Carolinas, or, most important of all, the sugar plantations on the British islands in the Caribbean. The ships that brought them would then fill their holds with tobacco, rice, or sugar, and make the return voyage to Britain, to begin the cycle all over again.

This triangle of trade fulfilled the purposes of the empire admirably: Britain's economy advanced as the colonies fed in raw materials and consumed its manufactures. However, not all of the American colonies fit in. The Caribbean sugar islands certainly did; they were the keystone of the entire edifice. The southern colonies on the American mainland, the Chesapeake and the Carolinas did too, since like the Caribbean colonies they were plantation economies specially set up to serve the Empire. The middle colonies found a niche as well: they exported foodstuffs to sustain the slave populations to the south, and with the profits could pay handsomely for British imports.

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The New England colonies did not fit at all. They were not lush enough to export agricultural goods, and their manufactures and commerce competed directly with the mother country. The British passed Navigation Acts that strove to suppress this competition, but they were honored largely in the breach, and proved to be a growing irritant between the colonies and the Crown.

An even graver source of conflict appeared in the middle of the eighteenth century, one that led directly to the American Revolution. It stemmed from the fact that the British were not the only Europeans to settle along the American coast. A full century before the first English colonies were established, the Spanish and Portuguese had laid claim to the southern continent of the Americas, and had colonized as far north as Mexico and Florida. At the same time that English expansion got under way, the Dutch and the French started colonizing as well, creating several significant settlements along the North American coast. At the mouth of the Hudson river the Dutch established New Amsterdam, while along the Saint Lawrence river the French founded the colony of Quebec.

The Dutch lost a series of wars to the English in the later part of the 1600s, and Dutch New Amsterdam became British New York. France was at the time the greatest power in Europe, and her holdings in America threatened the English in several ways. There was always the possibility of direct conflict. Moreover, there was also the constant danger of the French inciting the Indians against the British. While the British came to settle, the French, who had plenty of land at home, came to trade, so their colonization did not antagonize the Indians to the same extent that British colonization did. Finally, the French had extensive claims west of the Appalachian mountains. Were they to establish a series of settlements and outposts, they could confine the British colonies to their narrow coastal strip forever.

This confrontation in America was just one theatre of a world-wide rivalry. In the middle years of the 1700s, the two empires came to blows in an involved series of contests known as the French and Indian Wars in America and the Seven Years War in Europe. These struggles came to an end

in 1763, and had two results of importance to the American colonists. First, the British took control of Canada, ending forever the French threat to the Thirteen Colonies. Second, the war left Britain with an enormous debt, which it soon began to cast about for the means to repay. The means the British government eventually chose were to have fateful consequences.

## THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

**T**HE FIRST CRISIS – Burdened by unprecedented financial obligations, and faced with the challenges of governing its enlarged empire, the post-war British government quickly enacted a series of measures that alienated the American colonists. The first resulted from an attempt to protect the colonies from hostile Indians. Almost as soon as peace was declared, a coalition of Indian tribes in the Ohio valley attacked British settlements, realizing that the new British claim to their territories was far more serious than had been French overlordship. In order to avoid further fighting along the frontier, the British established a western boundary on American migration. This act angered the land-hungry colonists, as did a currency act and a quartering act issued the following year. The former prohibited the colonies from issuing paper money to supplement their limited supply of coins, and the latter required them to provide barracks and supplies to British soldiers in the colonies.

The British action that really incensed the colonists, however, was a clumsy attempt to make the Americans pay for the debts incurred by the British during the recent war. Since the Americans paid only a fraction of the taxes borne by the inhabitants of Britain, and they had benefitted so greatly from the hard-won expulsion of the French from Canada, the government decided to increase their taxes. The Sugar Act of 1764 actually reduced the duties created by the Molasses Act of 1733, but now the British officials actually tried to collect them. The Stamp Act of 1765 reached more directly for the colonial pocketbook, requiring that almost all printed material, from licenses to newspapers to deeds and mortgages, be stamped with an official seal available only upon payment of

a tax. The Americans responded to these measures with meetings, protests, and violence. Most effective of all, the colonial merchants signed a non-importation agreement, establishing a boycott of British goods. This last measure hit the British where it hurt, and British merchants and financiers soon added their voices to the American protests. In March 1766 Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.

**The Second Crisis** – The colonists had won the battle, but not the war. In 1767 Parliament counter-attacked by passing a wide range of import duties on common goods entering America: tea, lead, glass and colors for paint. Furthermore, it legalized writs of assistance, which were generalized search warrants that government officials could use to search ships, businesses and even homes upon the mere suspicion that something illicit would turn up.

These “Townshend Acts,” named for the new British Prime Minister who proposed them, enraged the colonists, for they went beyond threatening their pocketbooks to threaten their rights as Englishmen. The colonial assemblies protested strongly, so strongly that Parliament dissolved the New York assembly and prohibited the Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia assemblies from meeting. Meanwhile, colonial merchants concluded another non-importation agreement and mobs of colonists began to take violent action, boarding and smashing British ships, attacking British customs officials, and tarring and feathering colonists who cooperated with the British.

When British troops were dispatched to enforce the laws the potential for trouble grew, as crowds of Americans taunted them and pelted them with stones and snowballs. The protests climaxed in the “Boston Massacre,” in which beleaguered British sentries fired upon a mob of colonials. Five were killed and many others were wounded. Faced with such widespread and violent opposition, the British government, now led by Lord North, repealed all of the Townshend Acts, except a small duty on tea. Tensions in the American colonies lessened and the next few years were marred by only occasional acts of violence.

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**The Final Crisis** – Behind the scenes, however, a small group of Americans worked to keep alive the spirit of rebellion. Led by Samuel Adams and James Otis, they established “Committees of Correspondence” to keep lines of communication between the colonies open, in case another threat to American liberty should arise. Despite the apparent reconciliation, they were convinced that Americans would never truly be free men so long as they remained subjects of the British Empire.

These radicals did not have to wait long. Rejecting even the nominal tax on tea, the only vestige of the Townshend Acts, the majority of the colonists boycotted British tea, and by 1773 this boycott had driven the British East India Company to the verge of bankruptcy. Faced with the collapse of one of the largest companies in England, and one in which many of its members held stock, Parliament tried to resolve the situation by giving the company a virtual monopoly in America, allowing it to sell tea at rock-bottom prices. While the small tax remained, American consumers were being offered a tremendous bargain.

Far from being overjoyed, however, the Americans rejected this ploy, refusing utterly to accept the tea. In Charleston, South Carolina, it was stored in damp cellars, where it rotted. In Annapolis, a ship and its cargo of tea were burned. Philadelphia and New York refused to allow ships carrying tea to enter their harbors. And in Boston, citizens dressed as Indians snuck aboard the ships and hurled 342 chests of tea into the harbor.

The government in Britain found this last act particularly intolerable and passed a series of acts that the colonists in turn found intolerable. The Intolerable Acts of 1774 closed Boston Harbor until the tea was paid for, revoked the Massachusetts Charter of 1691, prohibited town meetings, renewed the requirement that colonists feed and house British soldiers, and stipulated that British officials charged with a crime while enforcing British laws in America be tried at home in Great Britain. At the same time, although not for the same motives, the British Parliament passed the Quebec Act of 1774, which gave Canada control of all territories west

of the Appalachian Mountains and north of the Ohio River, allowed French law to be followed by the large French community that had remained in Quebec, and strengthened protection of the Catholic religion. While only the first measure of this act compromised American interests—it negated the claims of Massachusetts, Virginia and Connecticut in the northwestern region—the colonists disliked its protection of French and Catholic institutions, and saw it as just one more attempt by the British to punish them.

The Americans reacted strongly to these new affronts. They held mass protest meetings, began to set up alternative government structures to circumvent the British-controlled administrations, and twelve of the thirteen colonies sent representatives to a gathering in Philadelphia. This First Continental Congress assembled on September 5, 1774, demanded that the British moderate their policies, and resolved on common economic actions to achieve that end. Before disbanding, the delegates further resolved to meet again in the spring of 1775 if the British did not relent.

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**T**HE BRITISH DID NOT RELENT over the winter of 1774–5. Instead, they began to prepare measures to stamp out the growing insurrection. Concurrently, the American rebels heightened their preparations for an armed breach, and this mutual preparation made a breach all but certain. Once the war began, each year saw stroke and counter-stroke as the two antagonists sought to deal their foe a fatal blow. At first, both expected quick victory, but as the war dragged on, they realized that victory would only come after much hardship and bloodshed.

**1775** – The initial clashes came in April of this year, when a British column marched out of Boston to seize munitions and rebel leaders at Concord. Warned by Paul Revere and other messengers, the colonial militia—the “Minute Men” who had been training to counter just such a move by the British—hurried to block the way. The British brushed by a group at Lexington, killing several men, and made their way to Concord, where they found that the rebel leaders had fled and the supplies had mostly been hidden. Turning back to Boston, the Redcoats had to run a gauntlet as the American militia took up positions on both sides of the return route and gunned them down from behind rocks and trees. The British retreat became a rout, and the loss numbered 73 dead and 174 wounded before they regained the protection of the fortifications of Boston.

Thereafter, the situation at Boston settled into a long stalemate as a huge throng of New Englanders camped outside Boston, whose British garrison was too weak to drive them away. While the two sides eyed each other, delegates from all



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thirteen colonies met at Philadelphia in the Second Continental Congress and named George Washington as commander of the Continental army. Before he arrived outside Boston, though, the British did make an attempt to drive the Americans from their positions overlooking Boston Harbor. Holding their fire "until they could see the whites of their eyes," the Americans exacted a fearful toll from the British ranks before retreating in disorder. This action, known as the Battle of Bunker Hill, ended in a technical British victory, but at such a cost that the British shied away from frontal assaults on entrenched Americans for the remainder of the war. For the Americans, the battle was a tremendous boost: they may not have won, but they had put up a hell of a fight.

While the main armies spent the rest of the year in the stand-off at Boston, the Americans managed to mount an attack on Canada. Building on a successful surprise attack by Ethan Allen's "Green Mountain Boys" on the key fortress at Ticonderoga, an American army under General Montgomery moved by the traditional route along Lake Champlain between New York's Hudson Valley and the St. Lawrence seaway in Canada. Meanwhile, General Washington dispatched a force under General Benedict Arnold, which made a grueling winter march through the frozen wilderness of upstate Maine, to debouch suddenly outside the great fortress of Quebec. Despite their successful pincer movement, Montgomery and Arnold failed in their joint attack on the British bastion. Montgomery was killed and Arnold was wounded, and the American survivors fell back and took up winter quarters.

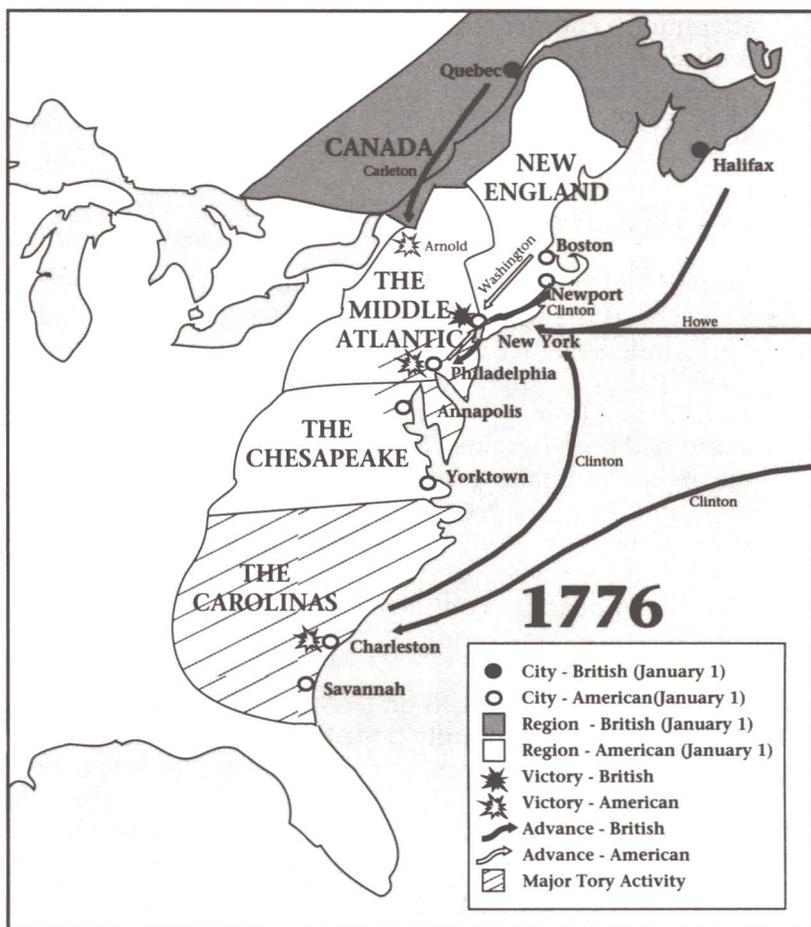
**1776** – The second year of the revolution began with an American success. Henry Knox, Washington's artillery chief, led a train of sledges carrying the heavy artillery captured at Fort Ticonderoga across the snowy New England countryside. Seeing these guns emplaced on Dorchester heights above the harbor, British General William Gage realized that his position was untenable, and as soon as the weather permitted, he loaded his command and as many Tories as would fit aboard transports and, escorted by warships of the Royal Navy, moved them to Canada. Never again would Boston see the hated "Lobsterbacks," nor fear a British invasion.

The British who retreated to Canada did not remain there long. Instead, they joined with a massive reinforcement of British soldiers and German mercenaries—the infamous "Hessians," hired by the British king against his own subjects. Together, this huge force, totalling about 30,000 men in all, moved by sea against New York, hoping to find a more defensible base and a more hospitable population than in Boston. George Washington had anticipated the move and already had the city fortified when the British fleet arrived. However, his inexperience worked against him as his new adversary, General Howe, outmaneuvered him and almost destroyed his army. The British occupied New York and pursued the beaten rebels into New Jersey.

At the same time, the British dispatched several thousand men against the Carolinas. Originally they were to link up with the local Tories, but this force had been destroyed at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge long before the British arrived. The British force attempted to sail into Charleston anyway, but were frustrated by the Americans defending Sullivan's Island at the entrance of the harbor. After suffering embarrassing losses and inflicting negligible harm on the defenders, the invasion fleet sailed away to rejoin the forces in the north.

On the northern frontier, the American forces were able to hold the line with a little help from the weather. Forced to retreat from their winter quarters inside Canada by the arrival in Quebec of a sizable British reinforcement under General Burgoyne, the Americans, now commanded by John Sullivan,

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attempted a counter-stroke but were blocked and dispersed. Both sides spent the late summer and early fall building up makeshift navies in order to secure control of Lake Champlain. When the British under Canadian governor Guy Carleton finally moved, they were able to defeat the American fleet, but the preparations had cost them too much time, and they had to retreat before the onset of winter.

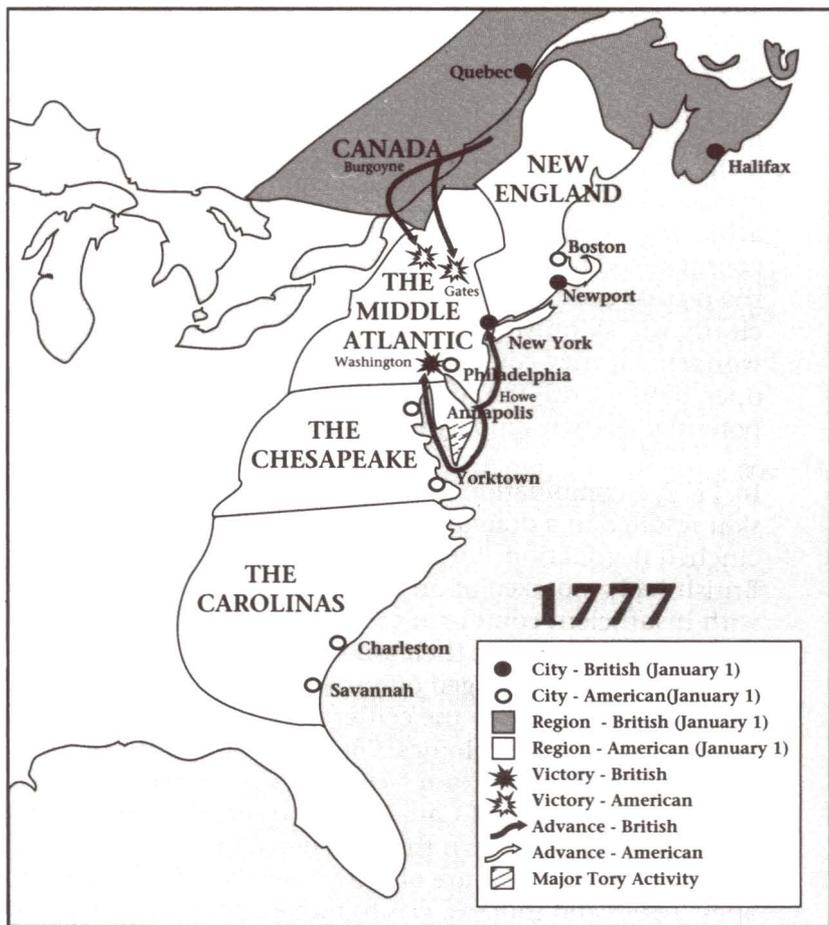
Despite these important successes, American fortunes were at a low ebb as the winter of 1776 approached. America had declared independence in July, but the fate of its main army made that move appear to be no more than an empty gesture. Chased from New York, George Washington's command had been hounded across New Jersey into Pennsylvania, its strength falling from around 20,000 men to just a few thousand. Since the retreating Americans had managed to seize all the boats along the Delaware River that divides New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the British dispersed their forces into winter quarters, confident they could administer the coup de grace come spring.

The over-confident British underestimated General Washington. Realizing that his only hope lay in a surprise attack, he rallied his remaining men on Christmas eve, leading them in a dangerous night-crossing of the Delaware to attack the Hessian garrison of Trenton. Taking the hung-over Germans completely by surprise, the victorious Americans took them prisoner. British reinforcements moved to pin the rebels against the river, but once again Washington stole a march on them, slipping away at night while leaving his camp fires burning. He led the pursuing forces on a merry chase across New Jersey as he tried to capture their treasury at New Brunswick. He failed, but savaged a British force at the Battle of Princeton. The British retreated their scattered garrisons to New York. While they had not been driven out of New Jersey in open battle, never again would they disperse their troops into numerous small garrisons. Without doing so, they could not hope to control the majority of Americans, who lived outside the main cities. Trenton proved to be a psychological blow as important as Bunker Hill.

**1777** – When the Americans declared their independence, they were motivated in large part by the need to prove their determination to the French. The French were anxious to help the American rebels in order to embarrass their old enemy, Britain, but were also afraid of being left holding the bag if the Americans and the British made up. The Declaration of Independence proved that the Americans were committed to achieving a complete break with Britain, but its effect was counteracted by the poor showing of Washington's army in the regular campaign season. While the Americans could clearly win skirmishes and backwoods brawls, the Europeans wondered if they could defeat a significant British force in open battle. Until the Americans demonstrated their military potential, French support would be dubious at best.

In 1777, a combination of British blundering and American skill resulted in a dramatic victory for American arms that cinched negotiations for an alliance with the French. The British had embarked upon an overly complex offensive plan with insufficient command coordination, and as a result handed the Americans their golden opportunity. The plan called for a three-pronged offensive to capture the Hudson Valley and thus isolate the center of rebellion, New England, from the rest of the colonies. One force, under Howe, was to move up the Hudson from New York City. A second thrust composed primarily of Canadians and Indians was to move from Lake Ontario down the Mohawk River to Albany, while the main force, a mixture of British regulars, German mercenaries, Tories and Indians, was to move down Lake Champlain to the Hudson and thence to Albany as well.

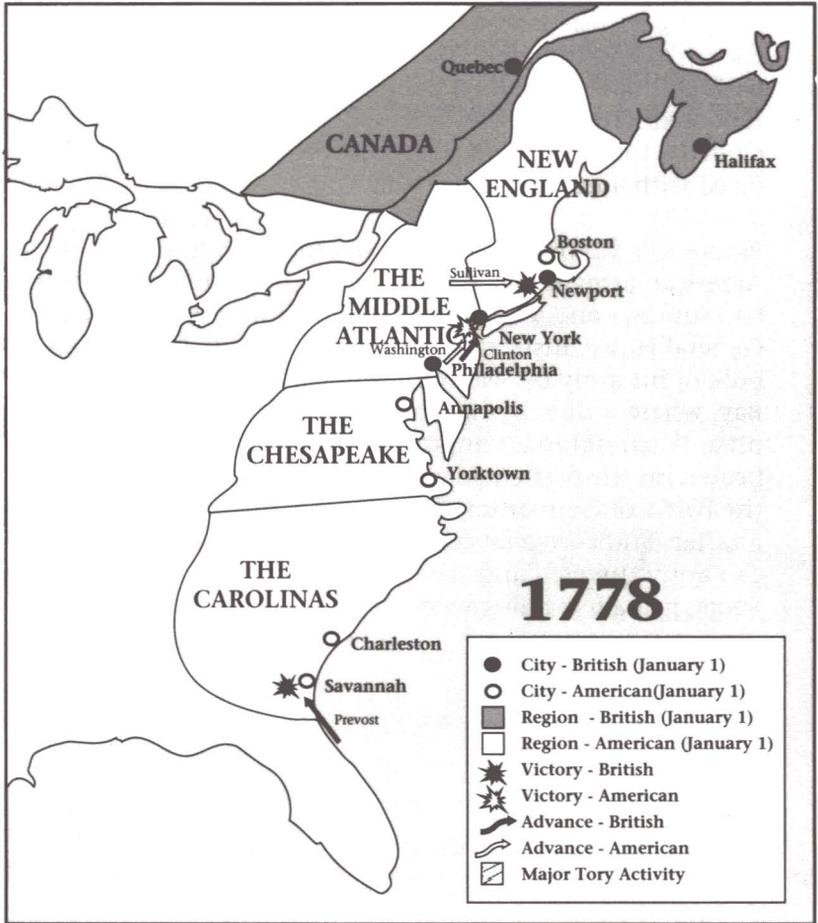
An ambitious plan on paper, it proved more than the British were capable of in practice. An American garrison was able to block the British drive down the Mohawk at Fort Stanwick, and the British never moved up the Hudson from New York in force. Thus left unsupported, the primary British thrust out of Canada, 7,000 regulars under General Burgoyne, forced its way down Lake Champlain, but then bogged down in the rugged terrain of northern New York. A foraging party of 1,000 German dragoons was annihilated by local militia in the Battle of Bennington, and the main body ran into a major force of Continental regulars under General Gates at



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Saratoga. In a three-week confrontation, the Americans threw back two British assaults and confined the enemy to an ever constricting perimeter. Under ceaseless bombardment and with all hope of reinforcements gone, General Burgoyne surrendered. Three months later, the French and Americans concluded a treaty of alliance, and the British were suddenly faced with a multinational war.

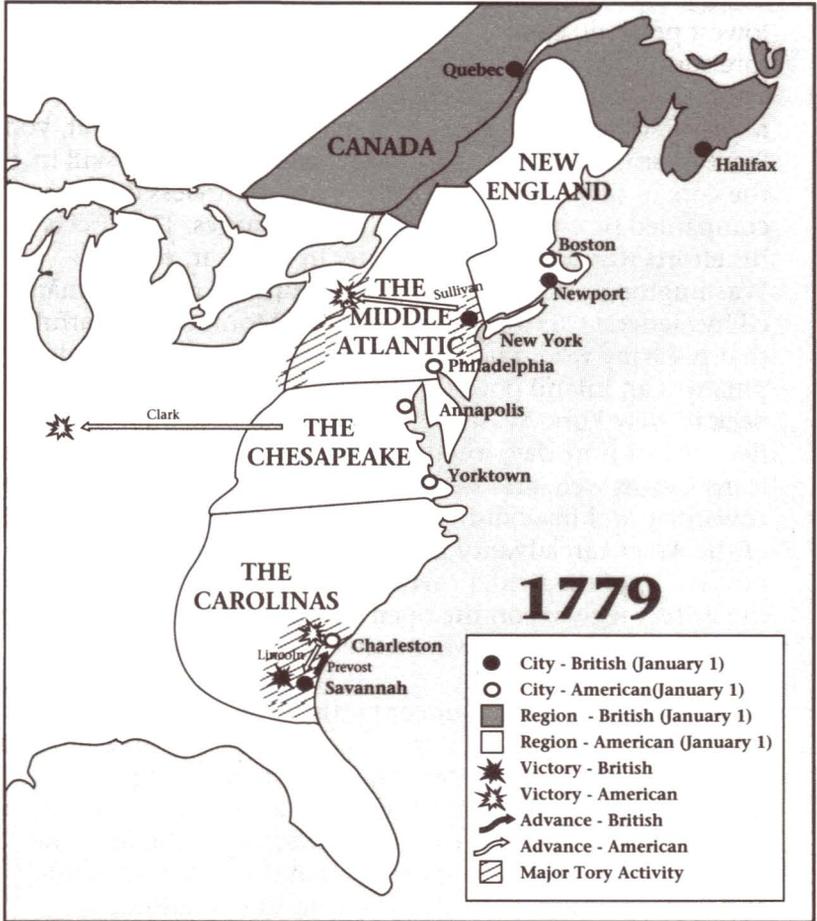
Before this victory could begin to tell, though, the main American army under Washington suffered through another bad summer and a far worse winter. During the summer, General Howe, instead of moving on Albany, had moved the bulk of his army by sea from New York to the Chesapeake Bay, where it disembarked and began to move on Philadelphia. Washington attempted to block this maneuver, but was beaten on the battlefield at Brandywine Creek and later at the Battle of Germantown. While the British enjoyed warm quarters and convivial company in Philadelphia, the American army shivered and starved in its winter quarters at Valley Forge, just a few miles away.



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**1778** – The Continental army's morale probably reached its lowest point during the ordeal at Valley Forge, but even before spring arrived the seeds of later success were being sewn by the efforts of Baron von Steuben. A Prussian martinet who misrepresented himself as an aide to Frederick the Great, von Steuben instilled confidence, discipline and tactical skill in the core of the Continental army through tireless drills accompanied by oaths sworn in three languages. The effects of his efforts were demonstrated later in the year, when Washington's army clashed with the British, now commanded by General Clinton, at the Battle of Monmouth. Fearful that his army would be cut off from the sea, since Philadelphia was an inland port, Clinton decided to move overland back to New York. Washington went after him and, on a fiercely hot June day, intercepted the British army. The Americans fought well, and were only frustrated because of the cowardice and insubordination of General Lee, commander of the American advance guard. The Americans remained in possession of the field, proving that they were now equal to the British regulars on the open field of battle, but the British army managed to slip away to the safety of New York.

Monmouth was the last major battle in the north, and the only major battle of 1778. In other theatres, the British began sponsoring vicious raids by Tories and Indians on patriot settlements in northwestern Pennsylvania and New York, and a British force captured the port of Savannah, Georgia in the far south. This latter event occurred at the end of December, and was a harbinger of a decisive shift of operations.



**1779** – The British capture of Savannah was the opening of a new phase of the war. Frustrated by patriot strength in the north, and distracted by French ambitions in the West Indies and Spanish designs on Gibraltar, the British channeled their energies into a southern campaign, in hopes that Tory strength and rebel weakness there would enable them to enjoy greater success. The year 1779 saw a see-saw series of battles as the British were defeated in their second attempt to take Charleston, while the Americans under General Lincoln similarly failed to regain Savannah in a joint effort with a French expeditionary force.

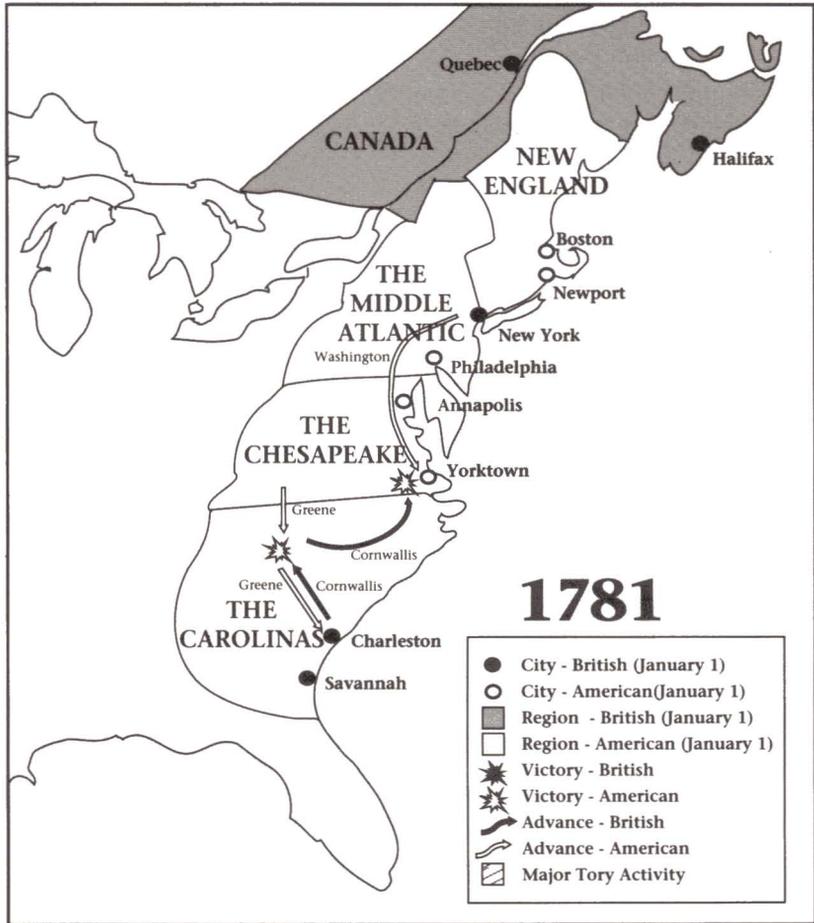
The Americans had better luck in the west. A small band captured the fort at Vincennes in the Ohio valley and a larger force savaged the Indian villages of western New York, reducing their enthusiasm for raiding the patriot settlements for the rest of the war. Outside New York, several strong points changed hands, and the two sides engaged in a continual quasi-guerilla war of raids and reprisals. In Europe, Franco-American fortunes were bolstered by a Spanish declaration of war on Britain, although the Spanish refused to ally directly with the American rebels.



**1780** – The sixth year of the war saw a continuing stalemate outside New York, while the British tide rose in the south. In the north, Benedict Arnold betrayed the American cause, feeling that his significant contributions had not been sufficiently rewarded, but his treason was discovered before it could do any damage. Meanwhile, a French army landed at Newport, Rhode Island, but a British blockade frustrated a proposed Franco-American move on New York. Toward the end of the year, discontent among the soldiers in the army outside New York boiled over in a series of mutinies. General Washington ended the first one leniently, but when another broke out in early 1781, he had it suppressed by force.

In South Carolina, Clinton arrived with a large reinforcement drawn from New York, and used it to finally take Charleston, capturing General Lincoln and 5,000 men in the greatest American setback of the war. Clinton then returned with much of his force to New York, but left an army, commanded by Earl Cornwallis and supported by a large number of Tories, to subdue the South Carolina countryside. However, their brutal occupation aroused the populace and led to the brilliant guerilla exploits of the "Swamp Fox" Francis Marion and other irregular leaders, which prevented the British from ever exercising effective control over the back country. Viewing the situation with alarm, the Continental Congress dispatched General Gates, the hero of Saratoga, to save the situation in the South. Unfortunately, Cornwallis proved a tougher foe than Burgoyne, and he decisively defeated Gates at the Battle of Camden in the middle of August. While the American position in the south seemed shattered, it was somewhat restored in October, when the North Carolina and Virginia militias destroyed a Tory force at the Battle of King's Mountain.

While the main action in the south still took place in the Carolinas, a British force under the turncoat Benedict Arnold landed in Virginia and began to ravage that under-defended region. The British thus enjoyed considerable success in the south, but during the next year they were to be lured to their destruction.



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**1781** – The new year began with American triumphs in the south, and would end with decisive American victory. The Continentals destroyed another Tory force at the Battle of Cowpens, and while they lost every succeeding battle in the Carolinas, each “victory” cost the British so dear that they ended up being whittled away, while the Americans could always make good their losses. Thus, while Cornwallis “beat” General Greene’s army at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, he was so weakened that he gave up on conquering the Carolinas and withdrew to link up with the British in Virginia. General Greene continued to “lose” battles to the British garrisons remaining in the Carolinas— at Hobkirk’s Hill, Fort Ninety-six and Eutaw Springs—but after each successive “victory” the British retreated back toward Charleston, until by the end of the year they held only that city and Savannah.

While Greene won his series of defeats in the Carolinas, Cornwallis retreated into a trap in Virginia. After an aggressive series of maneuvers against the growing American force in the region, he retreated to the small port of Yorktown, where he fortified his position to await reinforcements. Unfortunately for him, the French fleet appeared in the Chesapeake Bay before the British and, after a confused series of naval actions, drove the Royal Navy away. General Washington, sensing his chance, marched most of his army from New York, linked up with a French army accompanying the fleet, and together the allies lay siege to Cornwallis’s 8,000 troops in Yorktown. Cornwallis held out as long as he could, but trapped against the sea, he knew his position was hopeless. On October 19 his forces surrendered.

**1782** – There was very little military activity this year, since all parties recognized that the war in America was essentially over. The siege of New York continued, while the British evacuated all other posts along the coast. In England, Lord North's government fell in March, and Shelburne's Whig party opened negotiations almost immediately. By November an agreement had been hammered out, in which the British granted not only independence, but American control of the Ohio Valley as well. The British were anxious to secure peace with America, for they were worried about French successes in the West Indies. By offering the Americans such generous terms, they were able to induce them to terminate hostilities immediately, although they remained technically at war until the British and the French made peace. This followed soon after, for the British, relieved of operations in America, regained the initiative in the Caribbean Sea and defeated a Franco Spanish attack on Gibraltar. The War of the American Revolution was formally ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on January 20, 1783.

**The Revolution at Sea** – Compared to the struggle on land, the war at sea was a side show. However, the importance of the sea-lanes to Britain ensured that the Empire kept a watchful eye on the waves, and when the French intervened the naval struggle took on a significance that, for the British and the French, transcended the importance of the American Revolution.

During the first years of the revolution, the war at sea was strictly a matter of patriotic plundering. The Royal Navy, with its five dozen capital ships of the line, was so strong that there was never the slightest question of the Americans challenging it in a clash of naval power. Instead, the Americans relied mainly on commerce raiding by privateers, supplemented by aggressive actions by small Continental frigates against secondary British ships.

The privateers, of which there were hundreds operating each year, caused the British serious inconvenience. They captured or destroyed hundreds of British merchantmen each year, and by the end of the war had reduced the British merchant fleet by about a third. While their deprivations never threatened to destroy British commerce, or even to disrupt British supply lines to America, they did drive up British insurance rates and damaged the interests of Britain's politically powerful merchants, thereby contributing substantially to the erosion of support for the government as the war dragged on.

The frigates had a more mixed record. The Continental Congress began with an ambitious building program, undertaking the construction of thirteen frigates, but British capture of American port cities prevented completion of some of these. Of those that were commissioned, some managed to destroy British warships as well as merchantmen. However, these frigates were expensive and, in view of their peripheral impact on the war, of questionable value to the revolutionary cause.

One captain who proved his worth to the continental forces was John Paul Jones. Sailing directly into British waters, he raided the English coast, disrupted English shipping, and captured a British frigate in a desperate battle that saw his own

ship utterly destroyed. While his material contribution to the war effort was marginal, the fighting resolve summed up by his reply to a call to surrender—"I have not yet begun to fight"—heartened the Americans at a time when their armies gave them little to cheer about.

**The British Blockade** – The Americans were not the only ones to try to strike at the enemy's commerce. The British tried to impose a naval blockade in an attempt to deny the Americans vital war materials. Nevertheless, despite the overwhelming superiority of the Royal Navy, the oceans proved too vast for it to patrol effectively, and war material continued to reach the rebels throughout the conflict.

The blockade had the liability of annoying the neutral powers of Europe, which gave rise to the Russian-sponsored "League of Armed Neutrality." This coalition included Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, Portugal, Naples, and Holland in addition to Russia, and of these, Holland actually went to war with Britain because of its interference with neutral trade.

Dutch belligerence had a mixed result. On the one hand, it added to the forces against Britain, particularly at sea. On the other hand, it gave the British an opportunity to invade St. Eustacius, a Dutch colony in the West Indies that served as the chief entrepot of arms being smuggled to America.

## THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AND THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

**W**HILE THE ARMY played the most immediately vital role in the revolution, the Continental Congress was engaged in the equally important business of running the country and building the institutions that would provide the framework for the new nation. These less glamorous activities—raising taxes, printing money, recruiting soldiers, procuring supplies—made it possible for the armies to remain in the field, while the arduous task of defining the new government determined if the sacrifices and successes of the armed forces would, in the end, change things for the better. Many revolutions in history have succeeded in winning the war, but far fewer have succeeded in winning the peace.

**The Continental Congress** – The body that led the American Revolution began as the Second Continental Congress convened when the grievances of the First Continental Congress had not been redressed. Unlike its predecessor, though, which dissolved itself after a few short weeks, the Second Continental Congress remained in session for years. Delegates came and went, and twice it fled from its capital in Philadelphia, but it provided the administrative backbone of the Continental cause until the end of the war. Furthermore, it created the framework for national government that was to carry the new nation into independence and, in many ways, set the precedent for the Constitution adopted in 1787.

The formal structure of the Congress was rather ill-defined. Since the states considered themselves sovereign, each state had one vote, and state decisions theoretically should have been unanimous. However, the actual size of the state delegations varied, and they occasionally registered a vote of

"split." Furthermore, a majority of two-thirds of the states seems to have been accepted as sufficient on important questions, and on less important matters the body would follow the decision of a simple majority.

While the full body of Congress discussed and voted on important measures, much of the actual work of the assembly was carried out by specialized "committees designate." At first these committees were ad hoc, but over time they evolved into standing committees: the "Secret Committee" that handled relations with foreign governments, a Naval Committee, a Board of War, a Treasury Committee, a Committee of Account, and finally, an Executive Committee to coordinate the rest.

The delegates who represented the states were a mixed lot drawn from the upper classes of the constituencies which they theoretically represented. Some were dedicated revolutionaries, ready to sacrifice all to accomplish the revolution. Others were professional politicians who saw in the Congress an opportunity to establish themselves at the center of the emerging power structure. The majority, in all probability, were essentially dilettantes, prominent citizens who saw in congressional service a chance to mix with the bigwigs and participate in historic events. Once they arrived in Philadelphia, they found that service meant attending long hours of boring speeches, nit-picking committee meeting, and stilted entertainments. Food and lodging in Philadelphia were expensive, and few could continue to conduct their business, whether it was trade, manufacture, farming or the law, while away. Many simply could not afford to attend indefinitely, and others found that the excitement was gone long before their first term was up. And for the hard core of dedicated revolutionaries, men like John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, there were other important services to be performed such as representing the United States abroad and leading state governments. As a result, there was a heavy turnover among the delegates from year to year. This resulted in considerable administrative inefficiency and discontinuity, but the constant infusion of new blood meant that as soon as the country's mood changed, so did the mood of the Congress.

## THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

The Continental Congress was always riven by factional disputes and ideological struggles, as indeed any such representative institution must be. Delegates championed their state's interests equally with the nation's, and they differed widely on how far the revolution should go in political, social and economic reforms. For a body so hastily organized amid such tumultuous circumstances, the wonder is not how often it bogged down, but that it was able to function at all. That it not only functioned but led the country to victory is a tribute to the energy and idealism of the men who participated in it.

**The Declaration of Independence** – The first great issue before the Congress was the question of independence. Should the thirteen colonies formally separate themselves from Britain, or should they work merely for recognition of their desired autonomous status within the Empire? Some revolutionaries had aimed for independence long before Lexington and Concord, but even after these battles the overwhelming majority of Americans undoubtedly shrank from a total break with the mother country. During late 1775 and especially early 1776, Congress was fiercely divided between the radicals who favored a clean break and the moderates who clung to hopes of reconciliation.

In the year between the first shots and the first Fourth of July, two events above all swayed a sufficient number of colonists to favor a breach. The first was the British decision to recruit German mercenaries for the campaign of 1776. This employment of foreign troops against British citizens seemed an open admission that the government in London held no hopes for a reconciliation. The second affront occurred when Congress sent the Crown an obsequious plea for peace called the Olive Branch Petition. The Royal government responded with the Prohibitory Act, which closed the colonies to all overseas trade and offered only a pardon for the rebels. With their sincere attempt at reconciliation thus spurned, the moderates reluctantly accepted that Britain was determined to subjugate America by force of arms. In order to resist, it was necessary to procure foreign aid, and that would only be forthcoming if the rebels' commitment to independence was unambiguous. Therefore, in the summer of 1776, Thomas

Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, to proclaim to all the world the basis for the American Revolution. Thenceforth, there was no turning back. The patriots would have to hang together, as Benjamin Franklin sardonically observed, or they would certainly hang separately.

**The Articles of Confederation** – Once the Continental Congress had resolved upon independence, it then had to create a new national government. This was no easy task, for the interests of the states varied widely. While all the delegates agreed on the necessity for common institutions, they jealously guarded their separate sovereignties, and they haggled determinedly about questions that touched on their constituencies' interests. The four major points of disagreement were the new government's powers of taxation, the basis for representation in Congress, the political weight that slaves should have, and the legitimacy of some states' claims to western territories.

The question of taxation divided those who favored a strong central government from those who guarded states' rights. There was some consideration given to the possibility of giving the national government the right to tax, but the constituency that saw its primary interest in a strong central government was small, while the constituency in favor of state and local control was very large indeed. Thus, the national government got no tax powers in the Articles of Confederation, not even indirect taxes on imports, which was to be a weakness throughout its existence.

The question of representation divided the states with large populations from those with small populations. The large states wanted congressional votes to reflect the number of people in the state, while the small states feared that this would result in the domination of Congress by the large states at the expense of the interests of the small ones, and so they wanted each state to have an equal number of votes. One possible compromise was a bicameral legislature, with one house based on size and the other based on equal votes, but this idea was a novelty at the time and few voiced strong opinions in favor of it.

The question of slave representation aroused strong passions in the delegations. Already, many Americans were beginning to question the morality of slavery, and this moral aspect heightened the practical political problems the question presented. Should the slaves be counted in the census or not? Southerners favored their inclusion, to increase the numerical weight of their states, while Northerners resisted it, arguing that since the slaves had no political rights, their inclusion would give the southern whites disproportionate influence. This debate was further complicated by the fact that when it came to requisitioning taxes the sectional interests were reversed: the Southerners wanted to minimize their burden by discounting the slaves, while the Northerners insisted that the slaves' economic contribution justified their inclusion. On the economic level, the two sides agreed that each slave contributed only about three-fifths the value of a freeman, and this ratio was also suggested as the basis for political representation.

The final question, western lands, proved most divisive. Six states had no western lands at all, and adamantly insisted that western claims be turned over to the central government. The remaining seven had claims of varying sizes, and the degree of their determination to retain them reflected the amount of territory at stake. One state, Maryland, dug in its heels on the issue and refused to ratify the Articles for four years, until the states arrayed against it began to accept its position, despite their particular interests in the matter.

Congress had established a committee to draft the Articles almost as soon as independence was declared, but the delegates took over a year to draft the document. Ten states ratified the document immediately, but one delayed for a year, another delayed for two years, and Maryland held out until 1781.

**The Creation of Executive Agencies** – Since the proposed confederation was not greatly different from the congressional government that already existed, the delay in its adoption was not a great impediment to the war effort. A more serious obstacle was the lack of efficient executive agencies to conduct the government's day-to-day administration. The standing committees performed yeoman service, but their members were distracted by other obligations and their deliberations were vulnerable to debilitating interference by the general body. In particular, the executive committee found itself more and more overloaded, and the country's finances were slipping into total chaos. To cope with the growing crisis, in 1780 and 1781 a moderate delegate from Pennsylvania, Robert Morris, took the lead in organizing a standing executive branch. Four executive departments were created: Treasury, War, Navy, and State (which handled foreign affairs). A secretary was to head each, although Morris took over both the Treasury and the Navy. While these reforms took effect only as the military effort came to a close, they constituted a vital step in the organization of the new government.

## WARTIME FINANCES

**M**ORRIS' ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS were just part of a major overhaul of the congressional government that was aimed primarily at solving the country's economic crisis. Quite simply, the Congress had flooded the economy with paper money in order to pay for the first few years of the war effort, and now the chickens were coming home to roost. Without serious measures, the inflationary spiral would continue until the whole house of cards collapsed in on itself.

**Taxation with Representation** – The root of the problem lay in the basic issue of the war: taxation. The Americans said they objected to taxation without representation, but the fact of the matter was that they didn't much like taxation under any circumstances. Since the revolutionaries were the leaders in denouncing the British crown's attempts to raise taxes, they found themselves in a difficult position once they controlled the government. They couldn't raise taxes without appearing to be taking the place of the government they had just overthrown, but they couldn't govern without some source of revenue. If they couldn't raise money through taxation, how could they pay for the sinews of war? A traditional alternative to taxation was borrowing, but the American colonies did not have much surplus capital to begin with, and a fragile revolutionary regime was hardly an investment to attract what capital was available. Consequently, Congress resorted to a time-honored expedient: it simply printed the money it needed to pay its expenses, without regard for the long-term economic impact of this policy.

**The Crisis of Paper Money** – For the first few years, the issues of paper money did not do great harm; in fact, at first, they may have spurred the growth of the economy by making wealth more liquid. However, as the war dragged on, the inflationary spiral took off. The surplus of money drove up prices, which forced Congress to print more money, which then drove prices up again. In 1775 the Continental government issued \$6 million, \$13 million in 1777, \$63 million in 1778, and \$140 million in 1779. Correspondingly, each dollar was worth only 33% of its face value at the end of 1777, 20% of face value in 1778 and 2% by the middle of 1780. Thus, by 1780 the country was faced with the possibility of the total collapse of the currency and, quite probably, the collapse of the revolutionary government as well. The members of Congress were not ignorant of the dangers of paper issues, and attempted to counteract them by urging the states to tax the money back out of circulation. However, the states faced the same resistance to taxation that the Continental government did, and while state taxes rose dramatically over the course of the war, they could not keep up with the exorbitant costs of the military effort. Growing ever more desperate, Congress abandoned the money economy altogether in supporting the armies, and by 1779 was demanding direct contributions of material from the states. The next year, Congress ceased issuing the old currency, began printing a new one, and offered to exchange the old for the new at a 40 to 1 ratio, which, given the real value of the old paper, amounted to a partial repudiation of the debt.

**Fiscal Conservatism and the End of the War** – It was against this backdrop that Robert Morris proposed his sweeping reforms. Executive administration was but one measure he proposed to restore confidence in the Continental government and its financial institutions. Other aspects of his reform program were the creation of a national bank (to be incorporated by Congress, funded by private subscription, and empowered to issue notes), the issuing of “Morris notes” backed by his own credit, reform of the army’s procurement system to insure that contracts went to the lowest bidder, the establishment of a national accounting system, the apportionment of many war expenses directly to the states, and the authorization of poll, excise, and land taxes by Congress

## WARTIME FINANCES

to pay for the rest. He did not get a national bank or national taxes, but the rest of his proposals were adopted, and began to have a salutary effect on the nation's economy. Perhaps his greatest contribution was simply taking control of the Continental finances, cutting back expenditures and compelling the states by the force of his will to take a more responsible attitude. He was helped by the winding down of the war, which enabled the military budget to be cut without endangering the revolutionary cause.

However, as the war ended, Morris' parsimony almost caused a coup by disgruntled Continental officers who feared, with good reason, that back pay and promised pensions would never be forthcoming if they disbanded peacefully. This danger was overcome only when George Washington rebuked the conspirators severely, and the government agreed to a compromise that, while less generous than its wartime promises, it was able to honor for that very reason.

## HELP FROM ABROAD

**A**NOTHER REASON THAT Continental finances stabilized in the early 1780s was because of grants and loans of hard currency from European countries that were used to back the "Morris notes" and other Continental obligations. This financial support was just one example of the vital role played by aid to the American revolutionaries from Britain's enemies in Europe. If the Americans frustrated the British forces on their own, they only vanquished them with the help of other countries.

**The French Alliance** – The greatest contribution to American independence came from France. The French were spoiling for revenge ever since the British beat them in 1763, and they saw in the American Revolution the perfect instrument. From the very beginning they offered clandestine support, money and arms, and even before the official alliance they were openly letting American privateers reprovision in their Atlantic and channel ports.

After the Battle of Saratoga, their participation was all but certain. Within a few months, they concluded an alliance, and from 1778 onwards the war transcended the American Revolution. While the French sent naval squadrons and expeditionary forces to America several times, and even left one force under Comte de Rochambeau there permanently, they made an equal contribution by drawing a significant proportion of the British effort away from North America. The sugar islands of the Caribbean, not the thirteen colonies, were the most profitable part of the British Empire, and once these were threatened the Americans became a secondary concern. All during the last half of the war an amphibious struggle

## HELP FROM ABROAD

went on in the Caribbean, as French and British fleets landed troops on each others islands and clashed on the high seas. In the end, the major reason the British offered America extremely generous terms was that the French had the initiative in the Caribbean, and the British feared that they would lose those colonies as well as the American ones.

The fact that the Americans accepted the Treaty of Paris, even though they had pledged not to make peace separately from the French, showed that the relationship between America and France was not uniformly amicable. The French refused to support American ambitions in Canada, in part because the Protestant Americans threatened the rights of the Catholic French-Canadians, and in part because the French simply did not want to see their protégés become too powerful too fast. The Americans, for their part, held back from supporting French designs on the Newfoundland fisheries, in part because of the interests of New England fishermen and in part because they simply did not want to drag out the fight for independence longer than necessary.

**Spain and America** – The Spanish contribution to American independence is less well-known than the French, but was no less vital. The reason that the Spanish contribution is less well-known is that the Spanish and the Americans never directly allied with each other. The Spanish, with their extensive empire in America, were wary of supporting an American revolution. The Americans, for their part, refused to pay the Spanish price of alliance, which was a commitment to the liberation of Gibraltar. Each country was allied with France, but this never led to an alliance with each other.

The Spanish contribution was nevertheless vital because without Spanish support the French would have been unable to make their contribution. While the Spanish further tied down British resources with their prolonged siege of Gibraltar and a brilliant campaign in Florida, their critical contribution was simply the number of ships in their navy. By itself, the French navy was decidedly inferior to the Royal navy; in combination with the Spanish, it held a numerical edge. While the lack of coordination and inferior seamanship may have prevented the combination from being decisive, with-

out the numerical advantage the French would have been unable to pose a threat to the British. As it was, the Franco-Spanish forces came close to invading England itself in 1779, and even after this project was aborted, they tied down the British in European waters, in the Caribbean, and as far afield as India. The Spanish alliance enabled the French to turn the American revolution into a world war.

**Holland and the League of Armed Neutrality** – Britain's interference in neutral trade with America alienated most of the rest of Europe. Led by Russia, the remaining naval powers (and some countries with no navies to speak of) banded together in the League of Armed Neutrality. This coalition threatened Britain with an even more critical naval imbalance, although in the end only Holland went to war over Britain's trade policy. And in this case, the British actually initiated hostilities in order to gain the advantage of surprise. The British seized the Dutch entrepot of St. Eustasius, which was the smuggling capital of the Caribbean, and a number of Dutch colonies in West Africa. The Dutch fleet did force the British to divert ships to protect her merchantmen in the North Sea, but this pressure was hardly decisive.

**Peace: Wartime Negotiations and the Treaty of Paris** Despite their rejection of the "Olive Branch Petition," the British did not give up hope of a negotiated settlement. In fact, as the war dragged on, their terms became progressively more generous, so that by the middle of the war they were offering far more than the Americans had asked for at the beginning, and at the end of the war they were offering more than the Americans had ever hoped to get. Unfortunately, the evolution of British policy did not keep pace with events, and whenever they softened their position, the Americans had already hardened their resolve.

The first major peace initiative by the British came in 1776. The British commander, General William Howe, and his brother Lord Howe, who was serving as admiral of the naval squadron in America, were both Whigs who privately opposed the government's harsh policy and insisted that, as a condition of their service, they be empowered to negotiate peace. However, they were not empowered to negotiate with

the Continental Congress as a legal entity representing the colonies, which the revolutionaries now considered a precondition to negotiations. Their peace initiatives bore no more fruit than their military campaigns.

After the Battle of Saratoga, the British moderated their position considerably. In fact, they were so desperate to prevent an American alliance with France that they offered the Americans everything they had ever asked for, except outright independence. For the Americans, the offer came too late. Benjamin Franklin deftly used negotiations with Britain to scare the French, but the American diplomats never seriously considered accepting British terms.

During the early 1780s, as all the combatants staggered under the financial weight of the war effort, the diplomats continued to parley. Several times the French hinted that they might settle with the British on the basis of a peace in place: each power would retain those territories it actually controlled. To the Americans such a plan was anathema, and they desperately strove to keep the war going until they were in a more favorable position. Fortunately, they did not have to wait long.

Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown was the death knell of British power in the thirteen colonies, and everyone knew it. The Tory ministry fell shortly thereafter, and the Whigs who succeeded them thought only of how to cut their losses in America to salvage what they could in the West Indies. Furthermore, they hoped to wean the Americans away from their friendship with France. They offered the Americans independence plus all the western territories south of the Great Lakes, and asked only that the Americans stop fighting immediately, despite their pledge not to make a separate peace. These terms were too good for the Americans to pass up, but to save face, they insisted that while military actions might cease immediately, the two nations would remain formally at war until the French and British came to terms. This agreement, the Treaty of Paris, was signed in 1783.

The British used this respite to regain control of the Caribbean Sea and throw back a final Franco-Spanish attack on

Gibraltar. Seeing the tide of war begin to turn against them, the French began to negotiate in late 1782, and they, along with the Spanish, concluded peace with Britain in February of 1783. At the same time, America and Britain ceased to be at war in law as well as in fact. The American Revolution was over.

## CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLUTION

**T**HE AMERICAN REVOLUTION had far-reaching consequences for all three of the major combatants.

**End Of The "Old" British Empire** – For Great Britain, the war marked a watershed in the history of the Empire. The colonial relationships that had developed steadily since the early 1600s were shaken to their core and never really recovered. Beyond the loss of the American colonies, the late 1700s saw the decline in importance of the sugar islands of the West Indies and the abandonment of mercantilism as an economic policy. In the nineteenth century India was to become the jewel of the Empire, and the "white" colonies of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were gradually given the autonomy originally sought by their American comrades. While the British government never abandoned Imperial protection and preference schemes, it adopted a *laissez faire* policy within the Empire that diverged greatly from the economic policies before the revolution.

**The New American Republic** – The effects of the American Revolution on America were more obvious and more profound. The Americans emerged as a free and independent people, able to determine their own collective destiny on the North American continent unburdened and unrestrained by dependence on England or membership in a larger empire. The infant nation was to undergo a series of stresses and strains as it erected a novel republican form of government and expanded into the vastness of the continental interior, stresses and strains that culminated in a great civil war that tested the young nation to its limit. Once that challenge had been met, the country grew by leaps and bounds as it embraced the remaining wilderness and transformed itself into

the world's greatest industrial power. Just a little more than a century after it won independence the United States emerged onto the world stage, and in the the course of the next half century it took its place as the most powerful nation on earth.

**The American Revolution and the French Revolution**

The American Revolution served as an inspiration and model for liberal-minded men everywhere, and it indirectly supplied the cause of the great French Revolution of 1789 that transformed European society and all of Western civilization.

French reformers took heart from the American success, and longed to see the same liberal democratic principles replace the traditions of monarchy and aristocracy that had so long dominated their own country and the rest of Europe. Their chance came less than a decade after the end of the American Revolution, and as a direct outgrowth of French participation in it. The French had incurred an increasing debt with every war, and the American war proved to be the straw that broke the monarchy's back. Unable to pay the interest on its staggering loans, the government of King Louis XVI was forced to try to tax the nobility, a class that had enjoyed exemption from fiscal responsibility for generations. Outraged at this assault on their most fundamental privilege, and ambitious to strengthen their class against the power of the King, the nobility insisted that the monarch call together representatives of the nation in a session of the Estates General, a traditional parliament which had not met for 150 years. The Estates General duly met, but instead of enhancing the power of the nobles, it gave vent to the pent up grievances of the vast majority of the common people in the country, and set the stage for a far-reaching revolution that destroyed the monarchy and swept away the nobility. This revolution soon overflowed the boundaries of France, and spread beyond Europe to Latin America (just as the Spanish crown had feared). The echoes of the American Revolution reverberated in a series of democratic upheavals throughout the nineteenth century, and the shots fired on Lexington Green can still be heard around the world.

## *American Generals*



**Benedict Arnold** (1741–1801) An early volunteer for the Continental army, Arnold served with Ethan Allen and George Washington and constructed and commanded a fleet on Lake Champlain which inflicted serious losses on a superior British force. Resentful at being passed over for promotion and attracted by the opulent lifestyle of Loyalists he socialized with in Philadelphia, Arnold went over to the British in mid-1779, leaking American military plans. He escaped on a British ship when discovered, returning in September 1781 to lead a British attack. Died in London.



**Horatio Gates** (c.1728–1806) British-born, Gates served in the French and Indian War (1754–1763), returned to England and emigrated to America in 1772. He defeated the British at the Battle of Saratoga, was made president of the Board of War, and was proposed as commander of the Continental army in place of the then-struggling George Washington in 1777. Washington prevailed, and Gates ended up in South Carolina, where he was routed by Cornwallis. After the war he freed his slaves and served in the New York state legislature.



**Nathanael Greene** (1742–1786) Commander of the Rhode Island state army before the Revolution, Greene served as a major general under Washington in Boston, New York and New Jersey and led troops at Trenton, Brandywine and Germantown, 1776–77. Made quartermaster general in March 1778, he resigned in August after a dispute with the Treasury Board. He replaced Gates in the southern command in 1781 and inflicted a series of pyrrhic victories on the British, causing them to gradually withdraw from the Carolinas. Died in Savannah, Georgia.



**Charles Lee** (1731–1782) After serving in the British army and as a soldier of fortune in Poland, Lee emigrated to America in 1773 and joined the revolutionaries, primarily with an eye towards personal advancement. He was captured in December 1776 and held until 1778, during which time he suggested a plan

(ignored by his captors) for ending the revolution by taking the middle colonies. Released in a prisoner exchange, he conducted himself so shamefully in the Battle of Monmouth—harshly criticising Washington, ignoring his orders and calling an early retreat—that he was court-marshalled in August 1778 and suspended from command for a year. He was dismissed by Congress at the end of his suspension.



**Benjamin Lincoln** (1733–1810) A small-town farmer before the war, Lincoln was made a major-general in 1776 and put in command of the southern front in 1778. He was forced to surrender to the British at Charleston in 1780, a disastrous defeat for which he was widely criticized. He served as secretary

of war in the Continental Congress (1781–83) and after the war as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts.



**Daniel Morgan** (1736–1802) A teamster in civilian life, in 1775 he led a company of Virginia riflemen to New England and then on to Quebec. Captured there, he was exchanged in 1776, and commanded a regiment of sharpshooters at Saratoga in 1777. He resigned when overlooked for promotion, but returned

to service in 1780 and won a brilliant victory at Cowpens.

After the war he served as a militia officer and, briefly, as a Congressman.

## BIOGRAPHIES



**John Sullivan** (1740–1795) A member of the First Continental Congress, Sullivan served with Washington and also led the retreating American forces after the attempted invasion of Canada in 1775, their commander, General Montgomery, having been killed. He was taken prisoner at the Battle of Long Island

in August 1776, was released in December and rejoined Washington. In 1779 he wiped out the combined Iroquois/Loyalist forces in the Mohawk Valley of New York. He resigned due to ill health later that year, but continued in public service until his death.



**George Washington** (1732–1799)

Washington worked as a surveyor from age 14, served in the French and Indian War and at 20 inherited his family's Mount Vernon estate, making him one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. Made commander of all Virginia troops at the age of 23, he was appointed command-

er-in-chief of the Continental army in 1775. An inspiring and charismatic leader but a mediocre tactician, his career was a combination of humiliating defeats and bold initiatives, and after Valley Forge his enemies in Congress almost succeeded in having him replaced as commander-in-chief. (For more de-

tail on Washington's campaigns, see the Historical Background section.) After four years of gentleman farming, he was unanimously chosen president of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, was unanimously elected president in 1789 and was re-elected in 1792.



**Anthony Wayne** (1745–1796) A wealthy Pennsylvania tannery owner who rose to the rank of brigadier general in the Continental army, “Mad Anthony” is best known for his dramatic storming of the British fort at Stony Point in 1779. He also defeated the British and their Indian allies in Georgia and

after the war served two years in the Georgia legislature. In 1792 he became commander-in-chief of the U.S. army and “opened up” the Midwest by routing a confederation of Indian tribes in Ohio in 1794.

## ***American Politicians***



**John Adams** (1735–1826) An early advocate of independence, Adams wrote extensively against the Stamp Act but also defended the soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre, reflecting his equally strong belief in rule of law. He served in a variety of positions in the Continental Congress, nominating

Washington as commander-in-chief and leading the floor fight for acceptance of the Declaration of Independence. In 1777 he was sent to France with Benjamin Franklin and in 1785 he became the first U.S. ambassador to Britain. Adams served as Washington's vice president from 1789 to 1797, and as president from 1789 to 1801.



**Samuel Adams** (1722–1803) More of a firebrand than his second cousin John, Sam Adams helped instigate the Stamp Act Riots, wrote vicious polemics against the British presence in Boston, founded the committees of correspondence, helped plan the Boston Tea Party and was an early advocate of war preparations against the British. He was a member of the Continental Congress until 1781 and served as lieutenant governor and governor of Massachusetts after the war.



**Charles Carroll** (1737–1832) The longest surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the only Roman Catholic signatory, Carroll was a member of the committees of correspondence before and during the revolution and served on the Continental Congress's board of war from 1776 to 1778. In 1776 he was a member, with Benjamin Franklin, of a delegation which attempted to persuade the Canadians to join the revolution. After the war he served in the Maryland and U.S. Senates.



**Silas Deane** (1737–1789) The first American diplomat sent to France, Deane obtained a huge amount of arms for the revolutionaries in October 1777 and in November signed the formal U.S.-French alliance. Upon his return his reputation was destroyed by unproven accusations of embezzlement, and he went back to France in 1780, where he wrote a series of letters urging American reconciliation with Britain. In spite of this, Congress posthumously exonerated him of financial wrongdoing in 1842.



**Benjamin Franklin** (1706–1790) By the time the American Revolution began, Franklin had invented his stove, bifocal glasses, and the lightning rod; had conducted important experiments in electricity; had become the successful publisher of both the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*; had

helped establish a fire department, a lending library and a university; and had spent 16 years in London, mainly representing the Penn family's interests. He returned to America in 1775, helped draft the Declaration of Independence, and was then sent to France, where he successfully negotiated an alliance. After the war he negotiated the Treaty of Paris and became the first U.S. Postmaster General.



**John Hancock** (1737–1793) A wealthy merchant and local politician, Hancock chaired the committee which obtained the removal of British troops from Boston after the massacre. He led the radical Massachusetts patriots with Sam Adams, and was a member of the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1780, serving as

president from 1775 to 1777; his is the first and largest signature on the Declaration of Independence. After the war he was elected governor of Massachusetts nine times.

## BIOGRAPHIES



**John Jay** (1745–1829) A successful New York attorney, Jay opposed independence prior to the revolution, but afterwards was elected to the First Continental Congress, secured New York's approval of the Declaration of Independence, and in 1778 was elected president of the congress. In 1779 he went to Europe, where he negotiated unsuccessfully with Spain and later joined Franklin in England and negotiated generous peace terms. After the war he served as secretary of foreign affairs, first chief justice of the Supreme Court, special envoy to Great Britain and governor of New York.



**Thomas Jefferson** (1743–1826) A wealthy planter and Renaissance man, Jefferson was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Second Continental Congress, where he wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence. He returned to the Virginia legislature in 1776, and served as governor of the state from 1779 to 1781. He was secretary of state under Washington, vice president under Adams, and president from 1801 to 1809, during which time he acquired Louisiana for the U.S. (1803). He established the University of Virginia in 1819.



**Arthur Lee** (1740–1792) With Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane, Lee negotiated the alliance with France in 1777–78. He was recalled in 1778 due to his quarrels with his fellow diplomats, particularly Deane, whom he accused of embezzlement. He was a delegate to the Continental Convention from 1782 to 1784 and served on the U.S. Treasury Board from 1785 to 1789.



**Henry Laurens** (1724–1792) President of the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1778, Laurens was sent to Holland in 1780 to negotiate a \$10 million loan, but was captured by the British and imprisoned in the Tower of London. The discovery of a draft treaty between Holland and the U.S. in his papers led the British to declare war on the Dutch. Laurens was exchanged for General Cornwallis in 1781 and helped negotiate the final peace treaty between England and America.



**Robert Morris** (1734–1806) The financier of the revolution, Morris was a member of both Continental Congresses, although he delayed signing the Declaration of Independence for several weeks, hoping for Anglo-American reconciliation. He controlled military finance from 1776 to 1778, and was responsible for keeping the economy afloat throughout the course of the revolution. After the war he served as superintendent of finance, a delegate to the Constitutional Conven-



**Robert Livingston** (1746–1813) America's first secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (1781, under the Articles of Confederation), Livingston was very active in the finance, judicial and foreign affairs committees of the Continental Congresses and helped draft the Declaration. After the war he administered the oath of office to George Washington and helped secure the Louisiana Purchase as U.S. ambassador to France.

## ***British Generals***



**John Burgoyne** (1722–1792) A Seven Years' War veteran, General Burgoyne commanded the Canadian forces in the unsuccessful three-pronged offensive of 1777, which was meant to isolate the especially troublesome New England colonies. After his surrender at Saratoga he returned to England where he served

briefly as commander-in-chief of Ireland and wrote several plays.



**Guy Carleton** (1724–1808) Governor of Quebec from 1768 to 1778, Carleton reconciled the British and French-Canadian colonists in the province, thereby depriving the Americans of a potential Canadian "fifth column," and repulsed an American invasion in 1775–76. He resigned in 1778 over a disagreement

with the colonial secretary. In 1782 he was made commander-in-chief of British forces in North America.



**Henry Clinton** (1738–1795) After serving in the Seven Years' War, Clinton was posted to America as second-in-command to William Howe and fought at Bunker Hill and Long Island. When Howe retired in 1778 Clinton was named commander-in-chief. He led the army in the Carolinas in 1780, returning

to New York after the fall of Charleston. He resigned in 1781, after Cornwallis, his second-in-command, surrendered at Yorktown, a defeat for which Clinton was blamed by English public opinion.



**Earl Cornwallis** (1738–1805) A Seven Years' War veteran who favored a conciliatory line towards the rebels. Nevertheless, he served the British cause with distinction, chasing Washington out of New Jersey in 1776. Made commander of the British forces in the south in June 1780, he won a vital victory over

General Gates in August. A year later he was under siege at Yorktown by combined American and French forces and forced to surrender on October 19.



**William Howe** (1729–1814) Commander-in-chief of British forces from 1776 to 1778, Howe first saw action in America during the French and Indian War. Returning in 1775, he participated in the Battle of Bunker Hill and took New York the next year. Although he won a series of victories he was unable to

wipe out Washington's modest forces. After the British defeat at the Battle of Saratoga he resigned and returned to England.



**Thomas Gage** (1721–1787) Commander of all British forces in North America from 1763 to 1774, Gage was a French and Indian War veteran and a hard-line opponent of American independence. He helped shape the Intolerable Acts, particularly the quartering of soldiers in private homes, and served as military

governor of Massachusetts from 1775 to 1776; in this capacity he ordered the British march on Lexington and Concord. After the costly British victory at Bunker Hill, Gage was replaced by William Howe.

## ***British Politicians***



**Lord Rawden** (1754–1826) Francis Hastings, Marquess of Rawden-Hastings, Earl of Moira, entered the army in 1771. Despite his youth, he rose to command in the deep South after Cornwallis moved into Virginia. Even though he lost the Carolinas to General Greene, Rawden received a peerage in 1783, and went on to a distinguished administrative career in India.



**King George III** (1738–1820) King of England during the Revolutionary War and, by its end, a hated symbol of British intransigence, George had little to do with actually running the war, other than insisting that the struggle continue and refusing any compromise with the rebels. Fearing that the Irish might follow the American's lead, and hoping that the French would bankrupt themselves through their support of the Americans, he dragged Parliament kicking and screaming through the last two years of the war.



**Lord North** (1732–1792) Prime minister from 1770 to 1782. In dealing with the revolutionaries, North was torn between his own conciliatory instincts and the unbending opposition of his king. Upon becoming prime minister North repealed most import duties, but responded to the Boston Tea Party with the Intolerable Acts. Once hostilities broke out, North conducted the war unenthusiastically and repeatedly attempted to resign. King George finally accepted his resignation in 1783.



**Earl Shelburne** (1737–1805) A Seven Years' War veteran who held a variety of positions in British government. Shelburne, a leader of the Whig Party, was prime minister from July 1782 until April 1783, during which time the Treaty of Paris was signed (January 1783).

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